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## REVIEWS OF RECENT LITERATURE.

### GENERAL BIOLOGY.

**Woods Holl Lectures for 1899.**<sup>1</sup> — No clearer indication of the drift of affairs at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Holl can be found than that contained in the volume of lectures for the past year. The growing interest in the station as a botanical center is shown in the fact that, while in 1898 no botanical lectures were published, in the past year one-fourth of the lectures are by botanists. D. H. Campbell spoke on the evolutions of the sporophyte in the higher plants; the importance of fossil plants was emphasized by D. P. Penhallow; and D. T. Macdougall discussed some factors in distribution and the significance of mycorrhizas. Animal psychology was represented by two lectures by E. Thorndike, one on instinct, and the other on associative processes in animals, and by a lecture by H. S. Jennings, on the behavior of unicellular organisms. "Some Governing Factors usually neglected in Biological Investigations," by A. Hyatt, and "The Aims of the Quantitative Study of Variation," by C. B. Davenport, were both contributions to the field of general biology. Physiology was represented by A. Mathews's paper on the physiology of secretion and J. Loeb's interesting contribution on the nature of fertilization, while from the experimental standpoint T. H. Morgan's lecture on regeneration is of importance. Cytology, which heretofore has been paramount, was represented by only two papers: "Nuclear Division in Protozoa," by G. N. Calkins, and "The Significance of the Spiral Type of Cleavage," by C. M. Child. Other interesting lectures were one on blind-fishes, by C. H. Eigenmann, and one on the development of color in moths and butterflies, by A. G. Mayer. The series of lectures, taken as a whole, shows an unusually well-balanced development of biological interests.

P.

**Animal and Plant Colors.** — Color in nature has been made the subject of an interesting volume of some 350 pages, by Marion I.

<sup>1</sup> *Biological Lectures* from the Marine Laboratory, Woods Holl, Mass., 1899. Boston, Ginn & Company, 1900. 282 pp.

Newbigin.<sup>1</sup> The introductory portion, which is included in the first two chapters, deals with the well-known distinctions between pigmental and structural colors and a further classification within these two groups. It also contains a brief account of light-producing organisms. Then follows a series of chapters devoted to the consideration of the color phenomena in plants and in the various groups of the animal kingdom, special attention being paid to butterflies and to birds. As a result of this survey, the author states "that it is as yet impossible to give a definite physiological explanation of the origin of pigment; that it is practically impossible to classify pigments in a logical manner; that most of the problems connected with the subject are entirely unsolved." After this general denial of results, except from a simply descriptive standpoint, the author devotes a closing chapter to the theoretic aspects of the subject. This gives in an impartial way the explanations of the origin of different types of coloration as advocated by such Darwinists as Poulton, by such Lamarckians as Cunningham, and by those who, like Wallace, occupy intermediate grounds; Simroth's fanciful conceptions occupy what seems to us an undue amount of space. The Darwinian views are criticised from the standpoint of Piepers's able paper, and the views of the non-Darwinians are dismissed because they imply the inheritance of acquired characters.

The volume shows little originality, but the very fact that the author has no special views of her own to advocate allows her to give the views of others in a more impartial way. The book is concluded with a good list of references, an index of authors, and an index of subjects. It is exceptional in having escaped the hands of the chromo-lithographer or, in fact, those of any illustrator. P.

**The Plankton of the Elbe**, near Dresden, has been studied by Dr. B. Schorler<sup>2</sup> in collections made at eleven intervals, from April to November, 1898, in the main stream and in three contiguous bays. The current in the Elbe ranges from 40 to 190 cm. per second, and the plankton was less abundant in the main channel than it was in the quieter water of the adjacent bays, thus illustrating Schröder's law that the volume of plankton in a stream is inversely proportional to the rate of the current. In all, 143 species were found, of which

<sup>1</sup> Newbigin, M. I. *Color in Nature, a Study in Biology*. London, J. Murray, 1898. xii + 344 pp.

<sup>2</sup> Schorler, B. Das Plankton der Elbe bei Dresden, *Zeitschr. f. Gewässerkunde*, Bd. iii (1900), pp. 1-27.